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AP Literature and Composition

The Power of Choice

I believe in a very simple yet powerful force, one that affects each and every one of us every day, and often without even being noticed. That force is choice. Choice is more than merely choosing between two or more options; it is free will. As human beings, we are set apart by our ability to reason and make decisions through our reasoning. This fundamental difference is important because only you, and you alone, have control over your future.

Choice is a matter of freedom. We have the freedom to choose whatever path we wish, even if others would have it differently or there are forces at work to steer us in one direction or another. Yes, undeniably our decisions are shaped by outside circumstances. However, at the end of the day, it all comes down to what we choose. We are not controlled by anything, and we absolutely have the ability to do whatever it is that we want to do. As one of my favorite songs says, “you can have it all, but how much do you want it?” Even God, at least as portrayed by Morgan Freeman, said that he could do anything in the world, except affect free will. Despite the guise of comedy, he makes a valid point: we all have the power to make our own decisions, and nothing can take that away.

As the saying goes, “with great power comes great responsibility.” If you want to control your destiny, you have to take on responsibility for it, and the fact that yes, we make bad choices. We do not always take the “right” path, if there such a universally accepted decision. We get lost, and sometimes it takes a very long time to get back to where we want to be. However, fundamental to my belief in the power of choice is the right to failure. Every time we exercise our right to choice, we risk failure. This is the only way we can learn.

I believe that choice is fundamental to our lives because it can affect others in ways we

can't even begin to understand. The number of choices made every day is staggering, and when you consider how each one affects everything else, it weaves a confusing and tangled web that is nearly impossible to unravel. It may happen in our lives on a small scale, but when we make choices, we not only hold the power to change ourselves, but others as well. This kind of potential is what makes choice as powerful as it is.

A choice is something only you can make. If you choose to do something, the consequences are yours and yours alone. Just like no one can make a choice for you, no one else can accept the results. It not only makes us human, it makes us individuals who are accountable for our actions. This is the single most important tenet of my belief in the power of choice: only you can make a choice, and only you can take responsibility for it.